

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS DHAKA 002602

SIPDIS

FOR I/FW, B/G, IIP/G/NEA-SA, B/VOA/N (BANGLA SERVICE) STATE  
FOR SA/PAB, SA/PPD (LSCENSNY, SSTRYKER), SA/RA, INR/R/MR,  
AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)

CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45  
(MAJ NICHOLLS)

USARPAC FOR APOP-IM (MAJ HEDRICK)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [BG](#) [OCII](#)

SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Koran Desecration; Dhaka

Summary: "Sangbad" editorial says that the disclosure of the desecration of the Quran by the Americans themselves is strength of America's free society and democracy but the editorial suggested an orientation for the U.S. armed forces and administrative officials on the cultural sensitivities of other nations.

Following are excerpts from the op-ed article:

-----  
Koran Desecration  
-----

"Exemplary Punishments Must Be Given To Quran Desecrators"  
Pro-Awami League Bangla language daily "Sangbad" editorially  
comments (6/6/05):

Desecration of the Holy Quran or for that matter any holy books is an unpardonable crime. It is natural therefore that the Muslim World will demonstrate utter anger. Many people think that the desecration of the Quran is an unwanted sequel to the situation which the United States created after the 9/11. President Bush's declaration of crusade after 9/11 gave birth to the idea among all Americans that each Muslim is either a terrorist or in some way involved with terrorist activities. As a result, the idea that Muslims are criminals grew among the American administration and the U.S. armed forces. And its natural consequence is the inhuman torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison. Similarly, Muslim prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay prison have been under continuous torture although there are no specific allegations against them and they have not yet been produced before a court for trial. It is as if the U.S. administration thinks that since Muslims are suspected terrorists, they have no right to justice.

At a time when the World Muslim community is angry with the Americans, the story of the desecration of the Quran came first from the Americans. First Newsweek, and then the Pentagon disclosed five instances of the desecration of the Quran. This disclosure demonstrates the strength of the American free society and democracy.

Now the Americans have been saying that tough punitive actions will be taken against the desecrators. But how far will it pacify the Muslims is a question. Moreover, what is the guarantee that the same incidents will not be repeated?

The American administration should change its hostile idea about Muslims and American troops and officials require necessary orientation and motivation. Security officials should be trained on cultural sensitivities. Only these steps may avoid repetition of such unpardonable crimes.

Thomas